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AUTHOR Murphy, Michael J.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the content and development of the 45 school district career ladder plans submitted in 1984 to the Utah State Office of Education. Descriptive commentary and data tables are used to examine (1) the structure and composition of planning committees; (2) teacher evaluation provisions, including changes in evaluation methods, the person or group responsible for teacher evaluation, information sources for evaluation, and the status of development of evaluation instruments and procedures; (3) the frequency of various features of career ladder plans, including extended contract years, the number and nature of steps in the career ladder, and teacher selection methods and criteria; and (4) funding and accounting methods. Eight provisions found in a few plans are noted as potential inprovements to other districts' career ladder systems. Three broader issues are also discussed: (1) whether advancement based on job enlargement violates the spirit of career ladders, (2) the respective merits of competitive selection and performance standards for promotion, and (3) whether districts should be restricted to a few "best" career ladder plans. General conclusions regarding the status and value of Utah's career ladder plans complete the report. (MCG)

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Analysis of Utah Career Ladder Plans

Michael J. Murphy

Ken Peterson

Don Kauchak

University of Utah

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ANALYSIS OF UTAH CAREER LADDER PLANS

A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
BY THE CAREER LADDER RESEARCH GROUP
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

MICHAEL J. MURPHY
KENNETH D. PETERSON
DONALD P. KAUCHAK[1]

INTRODUCTION

Forty five career ladder plans were received from the Utah State Office of Education for review. Forty of the plans were from school districts, five were from vocational/technical and other special schools that were eligible to participate in the state's career ladder program. The career ladder plans reviewed were those submitted to the Utah State Board of Education in response to the May 15, 1984 deadline in the call for plans and subsequently approved the during the summer.

Each of the forty five career ladder plans was read carefully and important elements of the plan and the planning process were coded and recorded on coding summary sheets devised by the Career Ladder Research Group. No data about career ladder programs were collected directly from the forty five school districts and eligible schools. Consequently this report is based wholly on information provided in the career ladder plans submitted to the Utah State Board of Education. We recognize that changes have occurred since the plans were submitted in May, and do not assert that our findings represent an accurate picture of how plans were actually implemented during the fall of 1984. The Career Ladder Research Group, in cooperation with the USOE, is preparing six case studies of career ladder implementation which will be published separately. These case studies will trace district experience in operationalizing the submitted plans.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill 110 and the Utah State Office of Education Guidelines required broad representation in the career ladder planning process. Most districts complied with this requirement by establishing a career ladder planning committee consisting of teachers, parents, administrators and sometimes board members. In a few districts, multiple planning committees

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[1]Neil Van Leeuwen and Judy Smith were research associates on this project and were responsible for the extensive coding of each of the 45 career ladder plans. Steven Bossert, Ann Hart, and Rodney Ogawa, members of the Career Ladder Research Group, assisted in the preparation of this report.

and sometimes board members. In a few districts, multiple planning committees were formed. A summary of committee structures used for planning is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE USED FOR PLANNING

Type of Committee Structure	Number of Districts
Single	33 (83%)
Multiple	5 (13%)
Unknown	2 (5%)[2]

Teachers were in the majority in these committees, on average, with parents and administrators represented in about equal numbers.

Table 2

REPRESENTATION ON PLANNING COMMITTEES

	Average	Low	High
Parents	3.6	0	15
Teachers	6.3	2	20
Administrators	4.0	1	15

In most instances no group represented on the planning committees had a majority. However, when one group did have a majority of places, it was likely to be teachers. Table 3 on the following page shows the distribution of voting majorities on planning committees.

TEACHER EVALUATION PROVISIONS

This section will present and comment on the teacher evaluation provisions of the career ladder plans. In particular, the analysis

[2]Percentages in this and subsequent tables do not necessarily equal 100% due to rounding.

will address these questions: Do career ladder plans affect current teacher evaluation practice? Who will evaluate career ladder teachers? What evidence will be used in career ladder teacher evaluation? How far along are the districts in developing teacher evaluation changes?

Table 3

VOTING MAJORITY ON PLANNING COMMITTEES

	Number of Districts
No voting majority in any one group	29 (73%)
Teachers with a voting majority	9 (23%)
Parents with a voting majority	2 (5%)
Administrators with a voting majority	0 (0%)

Analysis and Comment

Table 4 on the next page presents the effect on current teacher evaluation systems of planning for career ladders in Utah school districts. The majority of school districts (85%) proposed to change their teacher evaluation practices in order to accommodate the career ladder system. Some districts (18%) installed new provisions for career ladder teachers, while retaining existing practices for teachers who do not elect to participate in career ladder advancement; most districts (67%) have a new evaluation program for all teachers. Only 15% of the districts indicated that they will stay with existing teacher evaluation practices. This represents a substantial influence of the career ladder program on teacher evaluation practice in Utah public schools. Indeed, the level of change might even have been higher if the conventional professional wisdom were not that teacher evaluation is a technically difficult and sociologically hazardous undertaking.

The career ladder plans also present important changes in <u>who</u> is to evaluate public school teachers. In the past, it has been uncommon in teacher evaluation to use evaluators other than principals for judgments about teachers. However, as shown in Table 5 on the following page, more than half the districts (53%) are using an evaluation committee of administrators, peers, and others. Some districts (20%) use both an evaluation committee and administrator as evaluators. This change in practice is an opening up of perspective in judging teacher quality.

Table 4

CHANGES IN DISTRICT EVALUATION SYSTEMS

System Change	Number of Districts
None	7 (15%)
New For All Teachers	30 (67%)
New For Career Ladder, Unchanged For Others	8 (18%)

Table 5

WHO EVALUATES CAREER LADDER TEACHERS

Evaluator	Number of Districts
Evaluation Committee	15 (33%)
Principal	21 (47%)
Both	9 (20%)

A significant effect of career ladder system design is the increase in sources of information used in teacher evaluation. Table 6 depicts the topics and lines of evidence which are included in career ladder documents. Administrator rating forms continue to be the dominant source of information about teacher performance, effectiveness, and quality. These rating forms usually involve several visits to the teacher's classroom, followed by a conference. The rating forms include many topics: planning, student outcomes, professional behavior, support of school activities, and appearance. (The Utah State Office of Education has a collection of Utah school district rating forms). Explicit evidence of student achievement, e.g., pre and post tests, is a provision of 53% of the school districts. Valid and reliable student achievement data for teacher evaluation purposes are difficult to obtain and rarely gathered by school districts. However, the specification of student achievement data by USOE guidelines has encouraged many districts to begin developing means to use them in teacher evaluation practice. Peer review, a little used technique in education but more common in other professional evaluation, is a feature of a third of district programs. This represents a substantial beginning in using peer perspective in judging teacher quality. Other newer lines of evidence included by a minority of districts include parent surveys, attention to professional development, documentation

of human relations, and other criteria such as product judgment. In all, the impact of career ladder design has been to stimulate development of a greater variety of evidence topics than have been used in earlier practice. The successful development and use of these lines will have to be carefully watched and judged.

A fourth point of analysis of district career ladder plans was the status of development of actual instruments and procedures to be used in teacher evaluation. Pressure for innovation was confined to a short period of time, especially for teacher evaluation development which generally is recognized to be a very difficult area. Table 7 presents the status of development of actual evaluation procedures and instruments for districts at the time of program approval. Only 27% of the districts indicated that they had their forms, procedures, and techniques developed at this stage. This may present considerable difficulty to implementation because the national experience with teacher evaluation suggests that such forms are not routinely available. At the same time, the developmental activity of the majority of districts presents an unusual opportunity for innovation that has national implications.

Table 6

SOURCES OF EVALUATION DATA USED BY DISTRICTS

Evaluation Source, Topic	Number of Districts
Administrator rating form, teacher effectiveness	38 (84%)
Student progress, achievement (explicit evidence)	24 (53%)
Peer teachers	14 (31%)
Self	13 (29%)
Student report	12 (27%)
Professionalism (courses, inservice, training, etc.)	9 (20%)
Parents	8 (18%)
Interviews (by administrators)	5 (11%)
Human relations (explicit evidence)	4 (9%)
Community Relations	1 (2%)
Other (e.g., project, ethics)	5 (11%)

Table 7

STATUS OF EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AT APPROVAL TIME

Status	Number of Districts
Developed	12 (27%)
Need Development	33 (73%)

A final analysis issue of the designs concerns evaluation of administrators that is concomitant with the evaluation of teachers. Such a practice has been argued for by teacher evaluation designers on grounds of fairness and necessity to estimate the administrators contribution to school quality, however USOE guidelines did not call for including administrator evaluation in career ladder designs. None of the Utah career ladder plans provided for evaluation of administrators.

CAREER LADDER PLAN FEATURES

In general school districts and eligible schools participating in the career ladder program divided entitlements among two program elements: one which provided additional contract days to all(or most) teachers regardless of ladder placement and one which provided for salary and status elevation of selected teachers. The former we call Extended Contract Year; the latter Career Ladder Advancement.

Extended Contract Year

Most districts have elected to use some of their career ladder money to pay teachers for additional work days. These days are frequently non-teaching days set aside before students report in the fall, after school closes for students in the spring, or during the school year. They are earmarked for staff development, planning, parent conferencing or grading. Analysis of the 45 career ladder plans from school districts and eligible schools in terms of the number of additional days in the extended calendar for teachers can be seen in Table 8 on the next page. The range of extended contract days was from none to 9.5 days. Thirty two of the 45 districts and eligible schools (71%) provide 3 to 4 days.

In 26 of the plans, participation in the extended contract year is mandatory, the extra days being added to all teacher contracts. In 14 of the plans, participation appears to be voluntary and teachers must ask to be included (or may request to be excluded).

Table 8

DAYS IN THE EXTENDED CONTRACT YEAR

Number of Days	Number of Districts
0	3 (7%)
1	1 (2%)
2	3 (7%)
3	13 (29%)
3.5	3 (7%)
4	16 (36%)
9.5	1 (2%)
Other	4 (9%)

Career Ladder Advancement

Career ladder advancement plans can be classified on the number of steps (or levels) they contain, and the job expectations that accompany promotion to higher levels. Most plans submitted use either three or four steps. The distribution of steps by plans is shown below in Table 9.

Table 9

CAREER LADDER STEPS

Number of Steps	Number of Districts
1	3 (7%)
2	1 (2%)
3	17 (38%)
4	22 (49%)
5	2 (4%)

It should be noted that some districts with 3,4 or 5 steps did not propose to fund or utilize the higher steps during the first year of operation.

Plans can also be categorized in terms of job expectations that accompany promotion, and on the basis of the way teachers are selected for promotion. In general, promotion may result in increased responsibility or work, or it may not. Teachers may be selected for promotion on the basis of special skills they possess, or they may be selected because they have demonstrated good general skills as a classroom teacher.

When steps carry with them no expectation of additional work or responsibility, promotion is usually a recognition of good or excellent performance as a classroom teacher. We call these Performance Recognition steps as they are rewards for good performance.

If steps require teachers to undertake duties beyond their normal teaching responsibilities we call them Job Enlargement steps.[3] Teachers may be selected for job enlarged steps either because they possess special abilities that suggest they will be successful in carrying out the extra duties, or they may be selected on the basis of general qualifications and performance as a teacher.

Plans can be classified according to whether steps beyond the entry level are performance recognition or job enlargement. Some districts have mixed the two types of steps in their plans, usually using performance recognition steps for the lower steps and job enlargement steps for higher steps. These we call "mixed" plans. The distribution of plans is shown in Table 10 on the next page.

Job enlargement steps can be further subdivided according to the type of additional responsibilities included. Some steps lead to the assignment of regular, on-going tasks such as mentoring of new teachers, evaluation of beginning teachers, department or grade level leadership. These can be thought of as Functional assignments. On the other hand, jobs can be enlarged by expecting teachers to undertake special projects such as the development of a tenth grade geometry syllabus, or preparation of instructional software for a microcomputer. These are Project assignments. Some districts proposed to use only Function Job Enlargement steps, others favored Project Job Enlargement steps but the majority used both types in their plan. The types of job enlargement steps are shown in Table 11 on the next page.

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[3]A third type of step would exist if promotion leads to a new job, i.e., new duties replace duties performed in the previous career step. This would be called a Job Differentiation step. None of the 45 plans we examined has job differentiation steps in the career ladder.

Table 10

CLASSIFICATION OF PLANS BY JOB EXPECTATIONS

Type of Plan	Number of Districts
Performance Recognition	5 (11%)
Job Enlargement	23 (51%)
Mixed	17 (38%)[3]

Table 11

DISTRIBUTION OF JOB ENLARGEMENT TYPES

Type	Number of Districts
Function Job Enlargement Only	7
Project Job Enlargement Only	7
Mixed	25

Of the 37 school districts and eligible schools that explicitly defined the length of appointment for steps beyond the first entry level step, 25 (68%) specified no time limit on appointments to the second, intermediate or "professional" step. Of the remaining 12 units, seven stipulated that the term of appointment at the second level would be one year and two others had a three year term of appointment. Upper steps in the career ladder tended to have a definite appointment length, mostly for one year.

Selection of Teachers

Mechanisms and criteria used to select teachers are important to a career ladder system for a variety of reasons: they define the distribution of rewards, they reflect assumptions about merit and merit assessment, they operationally define the incentives in a career ladder, and they determine the nature of teacher work force stratification. We found

[3]In many districts with 3 or more steps the second step appeared to be a more or less automatic promotion that resulted after a successful probationary period. We did not classify these districts as "mixed" here if this was their only performance recognition step.

that selection provisions in Utah career ladder plans differed by whether promotion was competitive or non-competitive, whether promotion was conditioned by prerequisite qualifications, whether the number of promotions to a given step was limited, and who determined and administered promotion criteria.

Competitive vs Non-competitive Promotion

There are two basic ways to regulate promotion on a career ladder. One is to establish performance criteria or standards and promote all who meet the standards of performance. A second approach is to define a position, invite applications and select the best qualified from those who apply. The former, which we call Non-Competitive Promotion, is the type used in higher education to move people through the professorial ranks. The latter, which we call Competitive Promotion, is the type used in most promotions to administrative positions and in the British career ladder.

If it is assumed that not everyone will or should qualify for promotion, limits in the two systems are set quite differently. In a non-competitive promotion, limits or quotas are established by the level of difficulty in the standards for promotion. In a competitive promotion, limits are established by limiting the number of promotional positions. Either system may be regulated so that only the most able succeed in gaining promotion.

In Utah career ladder plans we found that districts mixed promotion types. All districts and eligible schools chose a non-competetive procedure for the first promotion in the ladder. Usually promotion occurred after teacher performance had met a given standard for a certain number of years. This first promotion was generally analogous to the transistion to permanent or continuing contract status now used by most districts in Utah, and reflects promotion from probationer to full professional status.

Most districts used competitive promotion for higher steps in the ladder. In Utah school districts where there were more than two promotional steps and where plans were sufficiently detailed to determine promotion methods, 83% of the districts and eligible schools used competitive procedures for promotion to the highest step on the ladder, while only 17% used non-competitive procedures.

Competitive procedures are probably preferred for higher ladder step promotions for several reasons. First, teachers and others lack faith in evaluation systems. Where promotion opportunities are very limited, as they are in the upper steps, evaluation criteria and accuracy would be a major source of contention. More is demanded of the evaluation system in cases where promotion is non-competitive. Second, individuals are more likely to accept a decision if they have lost a promotion to another individual. Promotions are less likely to be grieved.

Prerequisite Qualifications for Promotion

All but seven districts or eligible schools specified prerequisite

qualifications for promotion eligibility. In most cases they were expressed in terms of a minimum number of years of teaching experience, or years of experience in the district. Some districts specified at least one successful evaluation as a minimum. Only 4 districts or eligible schools indicated that all teachers could be considered for promotion, regardless of experience or time in grade.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria can be of two general types: generalized and specialized. Generalized criteria would be criteria that refer to good teaching, or general excellence in teaching. Specialized criteria reflect an emphasis on particular skills or abilities such as ability to work with new teachers. Generalized criteria are more likely to be used in non-competitive promotion. Specialized criteria which reflect job specific requirements are more likely to be used in job enlargement systems where teachers will have to undertake specific functions or projects requiring different or additional skills or abilities.

It was often difficult to determine whether generalized or specialized criteria were to be used from the career ladder plans submitted. Some of this was because this information was not contained in the plans. In many cases, however, plans reflected ambiguity on this point, indicating that thinking on this issue was not yet clarified.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

Most districts and eligible schools are funding their career ladder program (including the extended contract year for all teachers) entirely with state career ladder funds. Three school districts have added some local funds (less than 3%) to finance their program. These 3 districts have apparently added funds to allow more days to be added to the extended contract year. One district has added substantial local funds to their program, and state career ladder funds cover less than 40% of their total expenditures for career ladders.

As provided in HB 110 and the USOE Guidelines, although districts may use state career ladder funds to extend contract days for all teachers, they must apply at least 50% of the entitlement to advancement on a career ladder. Most districts have elected to divide their career ladder monies fairly evenly between extended contract year and career ladder advancement. On average, districts are allocating 47.2 percent of their funds to the extended contract year and 53.8 percent to advancement on the career ladder. Table 12 on the next page shows the distribution of funds to career ladder advancement.

Table 12

PERCENT OF FUNDS GOING TO ADVANCEMENT ON THE CAREER LADDER

	Number of Districts[4]
50% to 55%	30 (70%)
56% to 60%	1 (3%)
61% to 70%	5 (13%)
71% to 80%	1 (3%)
81% to 90%	1 (3%)
91% to 100%	2 (5%)

Although the extended contract year increases earnings from teaching, it does not increase the rate of pay. Earnings are increased by adding paid days at the daily pay rate. The effect of the extended contract year is to allow teachers to work longer to earn more money. It is estimated that, on average, teachers in districts with an extended contract year earn $403.10 more per year as a result of these provisions. The least gain in a district is $119.23 and the greatest $1,070.02.

Many districts using job enlargement plans also extend the contract year by adding days. In these cases earnings are increased but rate of pay remains the same. Implicit in these programs is the assumption that the rate of pay is adequate, but earnings need to be increased. This is accomplished by providing selected teachers with the opportunity to work more.

Although districts were quite specific about additional days and payments that would be realized by teachers under provisions of the extended contract year, they were much less specific about earnings impacts of career ladder provisions. Some districts did specify extra days or ranges of extra days for which teachers on career ladder steps would be paid. Others associated stipend amounts with various steps on the career ladder. Many districts, however, indicated that the number

[4]Only data from the forty school district plans are included in this table. Nine districts of the forty have earmarked between 7% and 50% of their designated "advancement" money to underwrite special projects without specifying how these projects relate to career ladder positions. It is not possible to determine whether these project reserves will be used to promote the career ladder or to buy teacher time for district projects.

and qualifications of the teachers who applied would determine the size of payments made to any given individual on the ladder.

Thus the plans were not fiscally specific enough in most cases to estimate a profile of earnings gains that will accrue to teachers in promotional steps of the ladders. A number of districts supplied pay formulae or distribution formulae but did not provide enough information to estimate the actual amounts a given step holder might receive during 1984-85. Seventeen of forty district plans specified stipend amounts or days of extended service that would paid. The maximum additional career ladder payments for 1983-84 ranged from $750 to $3,024. Nine districts scheduled maximum payments of between $1,000 and $1,999, 5 districts will make maximum payments between $2,000 and $2,999 and two districts will pay $3,000 or more.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Time pressures for development meant that most school districts designed their career ladder systems in terms of USOE guidelines and whatever other scanty information on career ladders they could find. However, our review of plans submitted for approval uncovered a number of additional features that have the potential of enhancing career ladder systems. Each of the following provisions was found in from two to six district plans.

1. Support for beginning teachers which goes beyond evaluation and includes counselling, visits, mentors, and support groups. This feature has the potential of providing additional training to beginning teachers, making the first years more rewarding, and improving the professional climate of the district.

2. Remediation, attention to the "bad teacher". While the main function of career ladders is to recognize and reward quality performance, new systems also are needed to assist teachers having difficulty (if remediable) or to terminate (if incompetent).

3. Cost estimates of career ladder program. Career ladder start up and maintenance costs were considerable, but were not taken out of state provided career ladder funds. Several districts have begun to document their personnel and materials costs to design and implement career ladder systems.

4. Peer teacher assistance. A number of districts specified career ladder teacher activities to include work with peer teachers. This provision has the potential of increasing sharing among teachers and strengthening professionalism as it relates to communication and mutual support.

5. Ongoing career ladder committee which will develop the program beyond the first year. This feature is especially important because of obvious needs to improve and strengthen the initial career ladder designs in light of this year's experience.

6. Phasing in of career ladder provisions over a multi-year period. Several districts began with a complex design that will take several years to implement. These districts took into account the time needed for large scale innovation, development and decision making.

7. Tie career ladder program to inservice program. A number of districts used career ladder positions to improve and support ongoing inservice education. Others are making available new inservice programs which will encourage movement on the career ladder.

8. Specific career ladder appeals structure. Six districts created new appeal systems independent of regular grievance procedures or direct appeal to superintendent. This provision is desirable because of differences between career ladder decisions and those pertaining to conventional employment concerns, as well as the need for peer teacher involvement in career ladder appeals.

DISCUSSION OF CAREER LADDER ISSUES

During the formation of career ladder plans, and in the subsequent period of implementation, several issues have emerged which relate to our analysis of career ladder plans in Utah. These issues seem to arise from confusion or disagreements about the purposes of career ladders, the way in which excellent performance is best recognized and encouraged, and how career ladders fit with other attempts to develop and maintain a highly proficient teacher workforce in Utah schools. In large part these issues are being played out in discussions of how career ladder positions are defined and particularly the appropriateness of job enlargement, how teachers are promoted and how merit is reflected in the selection, and whether there is one career ladder design that is clearly superior to others. We will address these issues briefly below.

1. The job enlargement and special project focus of many plans has been criticized as a departure from the spirit of career ladders. Many teachers and others contend that such arrangements are simply "more work for more pay" and that they do little to develop and encourage good teachers. We conclude that this view is unnecessarily restrictive and overlooks several important factors. First, teachers were well represented on career ladder planning committees; often there were more teachers than parents or administrators, and sometimes teachers had an absolute majority on the committees. Since the overwhelming number (89%) of career ladder plans submitted contained at least some job enlargement steps, it seems reasonable to conclude that teachers involved in planning supported these provisions, or at least found them less objectionable than other options that may have been considered.

Second, job enlargement, in principle, is consistent with career and job redesign research that suggests that people need new challenges and responsibilities periodically to remain productive and satisfied. Career ladder plans that expect promoted teachers to help beginning teachers, or assume evaluation duties, for instance, may provide appropriate

new challenges. In industry a promotion which results in higher pay almost always results in additional responsibilities and more work. Bank branch managers may have to work after tellers have quit; group leaders at Bell Laboratories have work expectations that go beyond their role as a scientist in that organization. Senior teachers may reasonably expect to have greater responsibilities and perhaps work longer than other teachers.

And third, businesses are finding that making funds available to employees in the form of small grants to develop new products and product improvements pays off in better products, higher productivity, and improved employee satisfaction. This system of providing "entrepreneurial capital" in the business world would seem to have a direct parallel in some of the career ladder plans which encourage teachers to propose curriculum and instructional projects which they can accomplish within 10 or 20 extra work days.

2. Distribution of rewards by merit is another issue concerning career ladders for teachers. All of the plans are geared to recognize and directly reward good teachers. In all or part of each plan, teacher performance is monitored by a specified, and sometimes complicated, evaluation system. In early steps promotion is the consequence of evaluated performance that meets or exceeds standards. The linkage between performance and pay is obvious and direct in these promotions.

Most of the plans we reviewed move away from direct merit promotions in higher steps on the ladder. Promotions to limited upper ladder positions occur as the result of successful competition among applicants for the position, not as the direct result of measured performance exceeding a standard. If the promoted positions have additional duties, they may not be universally attractive. A weakness in such plans is that all good teachers will not apply because they may not wish to undertake the additional duties, hence those who decline to apply will not be promoted or rewarded for their good teaching.

Competitive selection systems are widely used in other areas and for other positions, however. In general they have a good track record of providing able leadership in business and industry, and government. If the selection competition is open, most competitors accept the outcome as fair. It seems reasonable to expect that talented teachers with a good record of performance will advance under such a system, and the best of those will reach the top of the ladder. Because the state of teacher evaluation art is primitive, and many teachers and administrators lack faith in existing evaluation systems, competitive promotion seems to be a workable substitute for direct performance based promotion in career ladder programs.

3. Some believe that a small number of best career ladder plans have emerged and that districts should be restricted to using one of these. Our research would not seem to support such a position. There are a number of interesting, and potentially useful plans that have been proposed. Because of the large local input in the development of each plan, they

respond to unique local contingencies and problems. Districts have made changes and will continue to make changes in their career ladder programs. Some will probably want to scrap their programs after a years experience and start over. Most districts and eligible schools will find ways to improve their programs and make them more suitable. To assist in this evolutionary development period, the Utah State Office of Education and others may wish to limit interventions and seek to facilitate broad exchanges of information about plans, and districts' experiences with them.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

As we reviewed the career ladder plans submitted by the 40 Utah school districts and the 5 other eligible schools there were several general things which stand out and which should be reported.

1. The plans are tentative. They are estimates made in May, 1984 of how the districts might execute the legislative option on career ladders. In most cases they were devised in barely two months planning by district personnel, parents and others. As might be expected, the plans are frequently ambiguous and at times uncertain.

2. Many modifications have probably been made in the career ladder plans since they were submitted in May, 1984. The analysis of career ladder plans can only reflect the state of district intentions as of the submission date.

3. Although some were not originally enthusiastic about career ladders, school districts in Utah have accepted the Legislature's career ladder challenge and have developed a remarkably diverse set of programs.

4. The process of designing career ladder systems has had a substantial and potentially valuable effect on Utah teacher evaluation practices. Existing teacher evaluation systems are being redesigned. The perspectives of judgment are being broadened to include additional sources and audiences. A search for basic innovation in gathering and using teacher evaluation data is under way. But evaluation of administrators is not being developed in initial local district plans.

Because of the substantial effects of career ladder development on teacher evaluation practice, and the known difficulties of such innovation, it will be important to provide sufficient time, communication among districts, and resources for districts to complete their development tasks. It should be expected that not all local district developments will be successful, given the levels of innovation specified in district plans. Finally, overall assessments of the impact of functioning career ladder plans on actual teacher evaluation practice will take time to be reliably carried out.

5. Utah's school districts have taken diverse approaches to meeting the Legislature's challenge while satisfying local needs. This has resulted in the development of varied and, sometimes, unique career

ladder programs. In this first year of implementing career ladders, this diversity is to be viewed positively. Over time, those elements of career ladder programs that contribute to the improvement of the teaching profession and instruction will be retained, and those that do not will be discarded. Without the variety that currently characterized districts' plans it is possible that successful alternatives would never be considered. As school districts learn from one another, some convergence is to be expected in career ladder programs.